PROSPECTUS OF A NEW WORK

TO BE ENTITLED

RECREATIONS IN

AGRICULTURE, NATURAL-HISTORY,

ARTS, & MISCELLANEOUS LITERATURE.

BY

JAMES ANDERSON, LL.D.

FRS. & FSA. E.

Honorary member of the Society of Arts, Agriculture, &c. BATH; of the Philosophical Society, MANCHESTER; of the Agricultural Society, ALTRINGHAM; of the Philosophical Society, NEWCASTLE; of the Society for promoting Natural-History, LONDON; of the Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Belles Lettres, DIJON; of the Royal Society of Agriculture, ST. PETERSBURGH; of the Royal Economical Society, BERLIN; of the Philosophical Society, PHILADELPHIA; correspondent member of the Royal Society of Agriculture, PARIS; and author of several performances.*

Knowledge is power. BACON.

THE work which is now, with due deference, offered to the public, is intended to furnish a rational amusement to active and energetic minds, during the hours of relaxation.

In the dawn of life, before the mind has experienced the domineering sway of unruly passions, and when its whole powers are directed to the acquisition of knowledge, time seems to be wanting for allowing the full measure of enjoyment: sleep only beguiles it for a while from its darling amusement; and no sooner are the eyes opened, than it rushes again, with the most eager avidity, into its delightful employment. The acquisition of knowledge then, is the inviable charm which constitutes the pleasure of youth; and in proportion as the attention comes to be diverted from this its original bias by following other pursuits, the charm loses its power; our happiness is diminished; and, without knowing the cause, we sigh in vain for a return of the joys that are past.

When man becomes capable of acting for himself, besides the preservation of the individual, the protecting and maintaining of those who depend upon him, must always be very interesting considerations to him; business or labour must therefore, at this period of life, necessarily occupy a principal share of his time: But business and labour are too fatiguing to admit of occupying the whole of the time of any man: The mind calls for some relaxation or amusement; and blessed are those who think of reverting to the original amusement of their childish days, the pursuit of knowledge. How different is their lot from that of those who, unfortunately mistaking the road at their first outset in life, are driven to the unsatisfactory re-

* The principal of these performances are as under, sold by G. and J. Robinson, and James Wallis, Pater-noster-row:

Essays relating to Agriculture and Rural Affairs, 3 vols. 8vo. with plates, fourth edition, 1l. 7s. boards. The third volume may be had separate, to complete sets, 9s. boards.

An Essay on Quick Lime as a cement and as a manure, 8vo. 5s. boards. Observe, this constitutes one of the Essays on Agriculture above.

A practical Treatise on Draining bogs and swampy grounds, illustrated by figures, with cursory remarks on the originality of Mr. Elkington's mode of draining. To which are added, directions for making a new kind of strong, cheap, and durable fence for rich lands; for erecting, at little expence, mill-dams or wiers upon rivers, that shall be alike firm and durable; for effectually guarding against encroachments by the sea upon land, and for gradually raising drowned fens into sound grass lands. As also, Enquisitions concerning the different breeds of sheep and other wool-bearing animals; being the principal additions that have been made to the fourth edition of Essays relating to Agriculture and Rural Affairs, published separately for the accommodation of the purchasers of the former editions of that work. Price 6s. boards.

Observations on the means of exciting a spirit of national industry, 4to. 15s. boards.

Observations on planting and training timber trees, by Agricola, 8vo. 3s. boards.

A practical treatise on smoaky chimneys, with a plate, third edition, 12mo. 1s. sewed.

N. B. In this little treatise was first explained the principle of the patent bath stove.

sources of gaming, drinking, debauchery, and excess, to get rid of that tiresomeness which, to the vacant mind, renders leisure the most dreaded of all evils! While misery and lassitude are the lot of these, those men who, without neglecting business or the social duties, still continue to cherish that first and most pleasing propensity, a love of knowledge; and who, without overstraining, go steadily forward, are amused by a never-ending succession of interesting objects, which keep the mind alive, and in a state of perpetual activity. None but those who have felt it can form an idea of the diversity which this kind of amusement admits, nor of the extent of the gratification it is fitted to afford. As knowledge thus gradually steals upon the mind, its perceptive and discriminative faculties are called into action: it then begins to see and to observe, to feel and to be moved, to know what is existence, what is life. No vacant hour to such a man can ever become tiresome: the mind is equally active when alone as in the midst of company: he

"Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
"Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

But if the horrors of solitude can be thus annihilated, the pleasures of society can yet in a more eminent degree be augmented by the acquisition of knowledge. To please others is the most certain way of deriving pleasure to ones self; and nothing is so likely to give universal satisfaction, as the power of giving generally correct information respecting such objects as attract the attention at the time: for man is a social being, and without the animating glow of sympathetic affections the spirit languishes. Pleasure, if not participated, loses its greatest charm; and it is from a reciprocation of ideas of a similar sort, which vivify the soul, and illuminate the understanding in social converse, that it derives its most sublime enjoyment. Thus does the acquisition of knowledge confer upon man a species of existence he could not have otherwise experienced;—a species of existence in which he never can find himself out of his place: and though the rose cannot be divested entirely of its thorn, yet he thus learns to taste its sweets without being wounded by its prickles.

Such was the general train of thought that gave rise to the idea of the present undertaking; and it is hoped that an attempt to extend, in a small degree, the sphere of human enjoyments, will be received with indulgence.

Nothing has perhaps contributed so much to discourage the attainment of knowledge, as the propensity which literary men too generally affect, of trying to disjoin the pursuits of literature from those of business and the ordinary occupations of life; in consequence of which these two classes of men have been taught to view each other with a kind of contemptuous disdain, which produces an estrangement that is highly injurious to both. It is very obvious that nothing can give to the man of business that high degree of respectability which will enable him to discharge with honour to himself the duties belonging to those dignified offices to which he may naturally aspire, so much as a competent degree of literary knowledge; nor can any thing so effectually counteract those chimerical eccentricities to which the mere literary character is so naturally prone, as that kind of cautious circumspection which habits of business so necessarily engender. It is only when an extensive knowledge of things as they really exist in this universe, is possessed by a man who is well acquainted with the common concerns of life, that that kind of solidity of judgment is acquired which has been dignified with the name of WISDOM. The following work will therefore be an attempt to bring together those two species of acquirements which have been so industriously, and, as the editor thinks, so injudiciously separated.

To effect these purposes, no mode of publication was deemed so proper as that of a periodical work. In this way information, by being divided into small portions, will be gradually imbibed, without interfering with the more weighty concerns of life. A succession of new objects being thus brought under view at short intervals of time, will serve to keep the attention continually awake, without occasioning fatigue; while sufficient time will be given to have each subject deliberately examined, and thoroughly understood, before it be driven away by another. Though the advance, after this manner, when prospectively viewed, may appear to be slow, and, on account of the great ease that will be experienced during the progress, it may seem to be inconsiderable; yet the attainments, when retrospectively viewed, will be found to be much greater than could have been conceived; and we shall soon find ourselves placed imperceptibly in a far more elevated situation than we once deemed could have ever been attainable without the most violent and painful exertions.

To render this progress still the more pleasing, the magisterial air of authority will be here as much as possible laid aside. Deep and abstruse disquisitions, which are better calculated to display the acquirements of the preceptor than to inform the pupil, will be avoided. The preceptor, becoming the companion, will advance with the pupil, hand in hand, in search of facts, which will be placed in such a light as shall tend to point out relations and connections that might otherwise have escaped notice, from whence will result conclusions which were by no means obvious at the beginning of the enquiry. In this manner will be formed, by degrees, habits of attention and diffidence, which will call forth the discriminative powers, on the due exercise of which all correct reasoning and true knowledge must ultimately depend. The mind will thus acquire the faculty of judging without embarrassment on every occasion, and of distinguishing those cases in which its assent or dissent ought to be given without reserve, from those where that decision should be suspended until farther elucidations shall bring forward the facts that are wanting to give it the certainty re-

The interest of Great Britain with regard to her American colonies considered, 8vo, 2s. 6d. sewed.

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An account of Russian sheep, by Dr. Pallas, with five appendixes by Dr. Anderson, tending to illustrate the natural and economical history of sheep, with plates, 8vo, 5s. boards.

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Ivan Tzaroviz, a tale, by the late Empress of Russia; translated from the Russian language, with a plate 8vo, 1s. sewed.

quired. Thus will the pupil, instead of requiring to be conducted through life in leading strings, and becoming the mere echo of the preceptor, be able to stand without support; and feeling his strength encreaſe by the regular exerciſe of his diſcriminative faculties, he will ſoon become his own best inſtructor, and the occaſional corrector as well of his own preceptor as of others.

" Fostered thus
" The cradled hero gains from female care
" His future vigour: but that vigour felt,
" He springs indignant from his nurse's arms;
" He nods the plumy crest, he shakes the spear,
" And is that awful thing which heaven ordain'd
" The scourge of tyrants, and his country's pride."

The objects to which the attention of the reader will be chiefly directed, are indicated in the title page. A few words under each head will ſerve to give a general idea of what is intended.

AGRICULTURE.

From what has been already said, it will not be expected that an attempt should here be made to give any thing like a *complete* BODY of practical agriculture, far leſs a finiſhed theory of that art. Were it even conſiſtent with the plan of the work, the state of our knowledge in this branch of ſcience is by far too circumſcribed to admit of it. As this, however, is confeſſedly the most uſeful of all arts; as bodily health and activity of mind are promoted in an eminent degree by the exertions that it requires; as it is better calculated than any other occupation for preſerving that ſimplicity of manners, and purity of morals, which conſtitute the ſureſt basis of a proſperous tranquillity in ſtates; and as it has, on theſe accounts, deſervedly obtained a very univerſal favour among men, who in general look forward with a wiſtful fondneſs to the time when they ſhall be enabled to indulge their partiality for this employment, in ſome favourite ſpot where they hope to end their days in tranquillity and peace, it appeared that this could not with propriety be omitted, in a work which profeſſes to give ſome information on every ſubject that can prove a ſource of general intereſt or entertainment to man. As the editor is better acquainted with this ſubject than with moſt others, he will endeavour, in the courſe of the work, to ſtate ſuch facts reſpecting it, as he thinks are of principal importance to be known; and to ſuggeſt ſuch ideas, as ſhall appear to him to be well calculated for guarding from error, and for inducing a rational progreſs in the principles and practice of this pleaſing and uſeful art.

NATURAL-HISTORY.

No man can exiſt without knowing ſomething of the properties and qualities of the objects that conſtitute this univerſe; and in proportion to the extent and the correctneſs of that knowledge, will his power be of rendering them ſubſervient to his own advantage, and the welfare of ſociety: but to what an infinite degree the power of man may be thus extended, thoſe only can form an adequate idea who have made large advances in this ſcience; and much it is to be regretted that the number of thoſe who have made great advances in the uſeful departments of this ſcience is ſtill ſo ſmall. Conſidered, then, in the view of utility only, natural-hiſtory would lay claim to a particular ſhare of attention; but when the ſublime entertainment it will afford is alſo taken into the account, it would have been altogether unpardonable to have overlooked it in this performance.

Among the infinite diverſity of objects which conſtitute this univerſe, there is not a ſingle individual to be found which, when carefully examined, does not exhibit the moſt ſtriking proofs of infinite wiſdom and beneficence in the *Great firſt cauſe*, which formed and endowed them with the qualities they ſeverally poſſeſs. But if, when conſidered ſeparately, they be objects of admiration and wonder, when they all come to be viewed as conſtituent parts of one univerſal and harmonious whole; when their reciprocations upon each other, and the general effects that theſe produce are minutely inveſtigated: when we are thus enabled to perceive in what manner contending powers and oppoſing influences, which upon a ſlight view ſeem to be calculated only for deſtruction, are, in truth, merely the inſtruments employed by infinite wiſdom for producing the moſt ſalutary effects in this univerſe, the ſoul is loſt in the expanſive glow of adoration which overpowers it. In every ſtep of its progreſs light flaſhes conviction on the enraptured mind, and it feels the joy of emerging from the gloom of doubt which oppreſſed it. That arrogance which ſo naturally ſwells the heart of man when he contemplates his own operations only, and which renders him alike contemptible and inſufferable by men of ſenſe, is moderated by the comparative inſignificance of theſe his puny efforts; and his mind aſſumes that humble abaſement which alone befits his ſituation in this world, and which is the only infallible ſource of unembittered enjoyment here below.

It is not, however, by a reiteration of vague and general declamation that the mind can be brought to feel the power of theſe ſublime impreſſions: It is only from a plain and unornamented diſplay of the peculiarities of individual objects that theſe concluſions will force themſelves upon it, without any ſtudious effort to bring them forward. On this plan it is propoſed to give ſuch a view of natural objects as ſhall ſeem to be beſt calculated to enable the reader to make general inductions from particular inveſtigations, thus to lay open the book of nature to the intellectual eye, ſo as to make him be able to read it with intelligence and ſatisfaction, whenever he ſhall be ſo enclined. In the courſe of this ſurvey, thoſe objects will be chiefly ſelected for illuſtration, which can be rendered the moſt directly beneficial to man, or thoſe which are eminently baneful to him in any reſpect, that he may be thus taught to counteract as much as poſſible the effects of the one, and to avail himſelf of the other in the higheſt degree. That no ambiguity may remain reſpecting the identity of objects, they will be ſeverally referred to by the Linnæan names: but farther than for the purpoſe of mere reference, the nomenclature will form no part of this work.

ARTS & MISCELLANEOUS LITERATURE.

The two departments abovenamed, will be kept diſtinct from each other, and from the reſt of the work; a certain proportion of each number being appropriated to each of theſe ſubjects, which will be ſeparately paged, ſo as to admit of being bound up, as one continued and undivided whole, when a volume is finiſhed. The remaining ſheets of each number will conſiſt of detached eſſays on literature, ſcience, and arts. Whatever can prove uſeful or intereſting to man may find a place in this department. Men of talents may here find a convenient opportu-

nity of ushering into the world with advantage, such speculations as they shall deem of importance; of proposing doubts, correcting errors, or supplying defects wherever they occur. The editor will strive to do all manner of justice to performances of merit which shall be offered to him, by carefully excluding all such essays, as according to his best judgment, would tend to diminish the respectability of his work. On this head he begs leave farther to observe, that as his great objects are to inform the understanding, and improve the heart, he will be studious to avoid every thing that can tend to irritate the passions, or to call forth any of the malevolent affections. For this reason PARTY politics, or those speculations which tend to exalt any one description of men in the state in preference to another, will on no account here find a place. Metaphysical disquisitions too, as tending to bewilder the understanding of plain men, and leading to no useful conclusion, he will studiously avoid. Still more carefully will he guard against that obscure kind of reasoning in physics which participates of the metaphysical cast; and which, by assuming data of an intricate nature that cannot be clearly established, leads only to perplexity and doubt. Religion also is a subject of too much importance to admit of being properly treated in a miscellany of this sort: polemical wranglings, therefore, and every thing which tends to unsettle the mind respecting religious opinions, will be cautiously avoided: nor will national reflections, nor personalities respecting any individual be at all tolerated. With these few restrictions it is hoped judicious persons will chearfully comply. The field will be still sufficiently wide to allow the fullest scope to the highest human powers.

If the editor, however, had had no other reliance but upon casual voluntary communications, he never could have thought of engaging in this undertaking. He relies upon the more steady co-operation of several persons of great eminence in the literary world, whose assistance he has engaged for that purpose, and whose names, were he at liberty to mention them, would give respectability to any work. Assured even of this aid, he has long balanced between the desire of performing what he thinks would be so praise-worthy, and the fear of failing in the attempt. Prevailed on at last by the entreaty of friends and his own wishes, he now proceeds with a degree of hesitation and diffidence of which he cannot divest himself, notwithstanding the experience he has so often had of the extreme indulgence of the public on his account: for, as the objects he aims at are, in his eyes, not of a trivial, but very important nature; and as the care of selecting, arranging, and guarding against error, and whatever might eventually prove in any way pernicious to society, must devolve entirely upon himself, he feels a weight of responsibility of which, though he wishes not to divest himself, he cannot but be deeply sensible.

It may not be improper to warn the reader, that although this work assumes somewhat of the same form, and will be published at the same time with the usual monthly publications, it will in few other respects resemble them. It will contain no news, nor chronological series of events; neither will there be found in it any plates for the mere purpose of ornament: but no reasonable expence will be spared in obtaining correct drawings of subjects that shall become necessary for illustration, which will be engraved in such a manner as, he has no doubt, will give general satisfaction. These engravings will be introduced as occasion shall call for, without any attempt to preserve an uniformity in this respect in the different numbers of the work. It is easy for the editor also, to foresee that these engravings will be much more numerous as the work advances, than can be required near the beginning of it.

To conclude, the editor, who is not entirely unknown to the public, will omit nothing within his power to render this work as deserving of favour as possible. Should the public indulgence be such as decisively to mark its approbation of this attempt, he will proceed in it with all the alacrity that is suitable to his time of life, while health shall permit. Among other good effects, it may serve to rouse and to keep alive in him, a little longer than might otherwise be the case, those active powers of the mind, the due exercise of which, he thinks, must ever constitute a principal part of the pleasure of existence; especially in the evening of life, when it becomes so necessary to banish the recollection of joys that are past, and to cherish a spirit of beneficence which alone affords an unclouded prospect to those who look forward. In the language of Fenelon he may say, "*Je ne cherche ni biens, ni autorité sur la terre; je ne veux qu'aider ceux qui cherchent la justice et la vertu.*" Should want of health, or other unlooked for circumstances, oblige the editor to discontinue his literary labours, his readers may rest assured that this event shall not take place without their knowledge; for, of whatever insignificance his name may be, he will on no account consent that that name shall ever be prostituted to serve any unworthy purpose in life.

††† During the continuance of war, little reliance can be placed on literary communications from abroad; but when peace shall be given to Europe, the editor, by means of the extensive correspondence he established in most countries on the globe, through the intervention of the Bee, may with confidence rely on obtaining from foreign parts an abundant supply of original communications.

CONDITIONS.

I. This work is proposed to be published in an octavo form, monthly, by James Wallis, No. 45 Paternoster-row, London.

II. Each number will consist of five sheets (eighty pages), and will be printed on fine demy paper with a new small pica letter, price one shilling and sixpence each number.

III. Plates, for illustration, will be inserted as occasion may require, and will be accurately designed (those in natural-history especially) and elegantly engraved.

IV. The first number will be published on the 1st of April, 1799.

*** *Persons in the country who shall be inclined to take in this work, will please to give their orders to their respective Booksellers.*

Communications to this work addressed to the publisher, post paid, will be duly attended to, and punctually acknowledged.